



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

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**NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE
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Idaho Public Health Officials Closely Monitor Respiratory Infections

Idaho Public Health officials are working closely with hospitals, public health districts, laboratories and healthcare providers to identify any possible clusters of respiratory illnesses caused by Enterovirus D68. More than a dozen other states are reporting increased hospitalizations of children due to possible Enterovirus D68 respiratory infections.

Enteroviruses are very common viruses that cause respiratory illnesses similar to common colds. Most people infected with an enterovirus have mild symptoms that do not require a doctor's care. However, some states are reporting that children with underlying health issues, particularly with asthma or other lung conditions, are experiencing difficulty breathing and require supportive medical treatment.

Idaho epidemiologists contacted hospitals and healthcare providers on Monday, querying them on possible infections they may be treating. Private labs throughout the state also were surveyed on their test results and capacity to test for enteroviruses.

To date, healthcare providers have reported several respiratory illnesses that may be due to enterovirus. Samples from these individuals are being sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify if they are Enterovirus D68; the CDC can currently subtype enteroviruses and identify D68. At this time, no cases of Enterovirus D68 have been confirmed in Idaho.

"The Idaho Division of Public Health is closely monitoring respiratory illnesses in the state, especially in children and teens," says Dr. Christine Hahn M.D., state epidemiologist. "Enterovirus infections are very common this time of year, but we want to be vigilant in identifying any clusters of illnesses to prevent the spread to vulnerable people, especially those with underlying health conditions."

Enteroviruses are transmitted through close contact with an infected person or by touching surfaces that are contaminated by the virus and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Symptoms of enterovirus illness include fever, runny nose, sneezing, coughing and body aches. There is no vaccine, but people can protect themselves and others by washing their hands frequently, covering their cough and staying home when sick.

Parents should be watchful of their children, especially if children have an underlying health condition such as asthma or a lung disease. If a child is ill and begins to have trouble breathing or is wheezing, parents should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

More information about Enterovirus D68 is available on the CDC website at:
http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html?s_cid=cdc_homepage_whatsnew_001